



TOM TINDALL
Director

County of Los Angeles INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1100 North Eastern Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90063

Telephone: (323) 267-2101
FAX: (323) 264-7135

"To enrich lives through effective and caring service"

October 25, 2012

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Tom Tindall
Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Tindall".

Subject: **STATUS REPORT ON RECONFIGURATION OF THE
COUNTYWIDE INTEGRATED RADIO SYSTEM (CWIRS)**

This is a status report on the Internal Services Department (ISD) project for frequency-band reconfiguration of the Countywide Integrated Radio System (CWIRS). As reported in our prior memoranda to your Board, the implementation phase of this project has remained on hold since 2008, pending resolution of U.S. State Department-Mexico treaty negotiations for new frequency allocations and assignments.

On June 8, 2012, the U.S. State Department signed a Protocol with Mexico for sharing spectrum in the 800 MHz band along the border, marking the beginning of the final phase for the FCC's mandatory 800 megahertz (MHz) rebanding across the country.

We expect that the FCC will issue an official Notice in the next several weeks, establishing rules and time frames to complete rebanding.

Background

CWIRS is a County radio system used for mobile communications by a number of departments, including Health Services, Public Works, Probation, and ISD. The Sheriff and Fire Departments do not use CWIRS. In addition to serving the day-to-day operations of its user departments, CWIRS is the County's primary disaster recovery mobile communications system in a major emergency incident.

About fifteen years ago, public agencies throughout the United States using the 800 MHz radio band frequency started to experience radio interference caused by adjacent frequency use by Nextel Communications, Inc. (now Sprint Nextel). To eliminate this interference and allocate frequencies for more efficient use, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued orders in 2004 requiring all 800 MHz licensees, including the County, to move to new frequencies. The FCC also ordered Sprint Nextel to provide funding to all licensees for such reconfiguration.

Reconfiguration involves retuning system hardware (*e.g.*, consoles, control stations, base stations, mobile and portable radios) and system software to use new frequencies, but does not require any civil engineering or construction.

Under FCC jurisdiction, reconfiguration is a two-phase project. Phase 1 is planning and design. Phase 2 is implementation.

Each phase requires: (1) a funding agreement with Sprint Nextel to commit funds as mandated by the FCC, and (2) a services agreement with our existing CWIRS equipment vendor, Harris Corporation, formerly M/A-COM.

On January 11, 2007, we notified your Board of ISD's intent to enter into sole source negotiations with Harris Corporation for agreements related to both the planning and implementation phases of this project.

Phase 1 / Planning & Design - Completed

Your Board approved Phase 1 agreements on February 20, 2007, with delegated authority to the ISD Director. Phase 1 was completed on October 29, 2007, when Harris Corporation delivered an implementation design plan and price proposal to ISD. On February 20, 2008, ISD submitted this plan to Sprint Nextel for consideration.

Phase 2 / Implementation – Commencing

Pursuant to the new treaty with Mexico for frequency allocations, the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau will soon issue a Report and Order to specify frequencies, time frames and interference conditions relevant to 800 MHz Reconfiguration in this region. We expect that the County will be formally advised of the new frequencies in the first quarter of 2013.

Current Status

With CWIRS reconfiguration held in abeyance for treaty negotiations, there was no requirement for Sprint Nextel to respond to our 2008 Reconfiguration Proposal at that time. Nevertheless, on March 15, 2012, in anticipation of a pending treaty, ISD requested, and ultimately received, comments from Sprint Nextel on the reconfiguration proposal. We have taken these into consideration, and used them to prepare a revised proposal, which was submitted to Sprint Nextel on October 16, 2012.

Additionally, as presented in our last report, ISD intends to explore an "opt-out" financial settlement in which a three-way accord is established among the County, Sprint Nextel, and the FCC. This settlement will give the County the flexibility to upgrade CWIRS to meet the national Project 25 (P25) land mobile radio standard. P25 will enhance its compatibility and interoperability with other and future state-of-the-art public safety/service communication systems, including the planned Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System (LA-RICS).

Our next steps will be as follows:

1. Continue and conclude discussions with Sprint Nextel for an approved rebanding proposal;
2. Seek a firm and irrevocable proposal, including maximum price, from our incumbent vendor, Harris Corporation, for a P25 upgrade and full system rebanding; and
3. Seek a three-way accord among the FCC, Sprint Nextel, and the County for an opt-out settlement.

Pending completion of the above, ISD will come before your Board for approval and acceptance of (i) the Harris Corporation proposal and (ii) the proposed opt-out agreement. We will continue to update your Board as any significant developments occur.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (323) 267-2101. Your staff may wish to contact the project leads: John Geiger at (323) 267-3443 or Robert King at (562) 940-2907.

TT:JLG:IT

c: ISD Board Deputies
William T Fujioka, CEO
Ellen Sandt, DCEO
Rich Sanchez, CIO